



For Immediate Release

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## ***ENZI GIVES CONGRESS INCOMPLETE GRADE ON HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS***

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said the Senate has taken the first step toward making college more affordable with passage of the Conference Report to the Higher Education Reconciliation bill, H.R. 2669, but said that Congress must act now on the Higher Education Amendments of 2007, S. 1642, to provide the kind of reforms students and working families need now.

“We are seeing only a fraction of the higher education picture by considering this conference report separately from the larger higher education reauthorization package,” Enzi said. “This report focuses only on a narrow slice of the Higher Education Act, one piece that is dependent on other foundational programs that are not part of reconciliation.

“The reconciliation package takes important steps to increase assistance for students seeking a college degree, but it is only a band-aid solution without the important, bipartisan reforms included in the reauthorization bill. We are cutting the bottom line without dealing with the quality and substance of these important programs.”

The Higher Education Amendments of 2007, S. 1642, which passed the Senate by a 95-0 vote, contains real reforms to root out bad actors in student lending, protect students borrowing money and takes steps to ensure that students and parents receive sound, honest advice about their student loans. In addition its provisions will require that students and parents have access to information they need to understand and manage their debts.

“Now is the time to get both bills done and have comprehensive higher education reform before we tackle No Child Left Behind, which is all about getting students ready to go to college,” Enzi said. “I don’t believe that we should continue any further discussions or negotiations on No Child Left Behind with our colleagues until the Higher Education Act amendments are reauthorized.”

The Higher Education Act expired in September, 2004, and has since been extended eight times, but is still due for reauthorization.

“America’s students and families deserve action to reauthorize and enhance the Higher Education Act,” Enzi said. “It’s time for Congress to stop kicking the can down the road, and deliver the improvements and reforms that America’s students need. This is the second time in as many Congresses we have been on the brink of systemic reform of federal higher education programs. I do not want to squander another. Our challenge is not only to improve access to higher education, but also to ensure that the quality of our system of higher education is not compromised.”

Enzi said that key provisions of S. 1642 include:

- Providing consumer friendly, easy to access and understand, detailed information about college tuition and fees;
- Calling for the Department of Education and IRS to coordinate and automate the FAFSA process;
- Requiring the Department of Education to establish protocols for limiting and restoring access to the National Student Loan Data System, a database that contains personal financial information about student borrowers and their families and is used by students, schools, lenders, and guarantee agencies;
- Requiring colleges to establish Codes of Conduct to prohibit their financial aid employees from receiving anything of value in exchange for advantages sought by lenders; and,
- Expanding prohibitions on guaranty agencies and lenders that restrict the offering of any premiums, payments, prizes, and tuition payments.

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